

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-43 (cancelled)

Claim 44 (currently amended) A method of operating an automated checkout comprising:

allowing a consumer to bring purchasable items to an automated checkout device;

allowing the consumer to scan the purchasable items and accumulate a cost for the scanned items on a display;

allowing the consumer to select a product from a dispensing device located in juxtaposition to the automated checkout;

storing the product to be dispensed in the dispensing device,

automatically dispensing the product from the dispensing device in response to the consumer's selection; and

automatically adding a cost of the product to the cost for the scanned items on the display.

Claim 45 (original) The method of Claim 44, wherein the consumer selects the product by using a touch screen.

Claim 46 (original) The method of Claim 44, including the step of allowing the consumer to pay for the product by credit/debit card.

Claim 47 (original) The method of Claim 44, wherein adding the cost of the product includes automatically increasing a balance due on a credit/debit card transaction.

Claim 48 (previously presented) A method of operating a checkout station comprising:

allowing a consumer to bring purchasable items to a store operator;

allowing the operator to scan the purchasable items and accumulate a cost for the scanned items;

allowing the consumer to independently purchase a product by touching a screen coupled to a dispensing device;

dispensing the product from the dispensing device in response to the consumer touching the screen, the dispensing device being located at the checkout station and thereby storing product at the checkout station; and

automatically adding a cost of the dispensed product to the cost for the scanned items.

Claim 49 (currently amended) A method of operating a checkout station comprising:

employing an operator to input purchasable items into a device and accumulate a cost for the purchasable items;

prompting a consumer to purchase a product from a dispensing device, the product being stored in the device that is located at the checkout stand;

automatically dispensing the product from the dispensing device upon the consumer's request; and

automatically adding a cost of the product to the cost for the purchasable items.

Claim 50 (currently amended) A method for providing a point of purchase product without the need for a cashier comprising:

providing a checkout area for the consumer to bring items for purchase;

accumulating a cost associated with the items the consumer wants;

storing~~providing~~ a product at the point of purchase;

prompting the consumer that ~~either~~ the product is available at the point of purchase;

dispensing the product to the consumer at the point of purchase upon a request by the consumer to purchase the product; and

automatically, without need for a cashier, adding to the cost associated with other items purchased any additional cost for the product.

Claim 51 (original) The method of Claim 50, which includes accepting a single payment in exchange for the product and other purchased items.

Claim 52 (original) The method of Claim 50, wherein the consumer is prompted that the product is available by an advertisement for the product.

Claim 53 (original) The method of Claim 50, wherein prompting the consumer includes prompting the consumer at a time selected from the group consisting of: before the consumer purchases the other consumable items, while the consumer is purchasing the other items and after the consumer purchases the other items.

Claim 54 (original) The method of Claim 50, which includes allowing a retail operator to enter the consumer's approval to purchase the product.

Claim 55 (original) The method of Claim 50, which includes allowing the consumer to enter the approval to purchase the product.

Claim 56 (original) A method for providing different products at a point-of purchase comprising:

stocking a plurality of different products at the point of purchase;

automatically prompting the consumer that the products are available at the point of purchase;

automatically accepting an approval by the consumer to purchase at least one of the products;

automatically dispensing the at least one the product to the consumer at the point of purchase; and

automatically adding to the cost of the product to the cost of any other items that are being purchased.

Claim 57 (original) The method of Claim 56, wherein prompting the consumer that the products are available includes displaying a dynamic display selected from the group consisting of: a display of the products, a message concerning the products, an advertisement concerning the products and a price reduction concerning the products.

Claim 58 (original) The method of Claim 56, which includes allowing a retail operator to enter the consumer's approval to purchase the at least one product.

Claim 59 (original) The method of Claim 56, which includes allowing the consumer to enter the approval to purchase the at least one product.

Claim 60 (original) A method for providing consumable and non-consumable products at the same location comprising:

stocking consumable and non-consumable products in a single device;

allowing a consumer to purchase a consumable product from the single device without the need for a cashier;

allowing the consumer to purchase a non-consumable product from the single device without the need for a cashier;

dispensing the consumable and non-consumable product to the consumer at the same location in the device; and

allowing the consumer to pay for the consumable and non-consumable product without the need for money.

Claim 61 (original) The method of Claim 60, which includes allowing the consumer to pay for the consumable and non-consumable product at one time.

Claim 62 (original) A method of generating revenue comprising:

providing a point of purchase device that is coupled to the retail purchasing device, the point of purchase device designed to dispense a product at the point of purchase; and

obtaining a fee paid from a supplier of the product in exchange for allowing the product to be dispensed from the point of purchase device.

Claim 63 (original) The method of Claim 62, wherein the point of purchase device is integral with the retail purchasing device.

Claim 64 (original) The method of Claim 62, wherein the retail purchasing device is selected from the group consisting of: a self-scanning purchasing device, a fuel dispensing gasoline pump, a debit/credit card reader and a cash register.

Claim 65 (currently amended) A method for purchasing items comprising the steps of:

transporting a plurality of items to a checkout station;

using a device that identifies costs for the items to create a purchase price for the plurality of items;

prompting a consumer to purchase a point of purchase product that is stored in the dispenser;

dispensing from a dispenser located at the checkout station the point of purchase product; and

automatically, without the need for a human operator, adding the cost of the point of purchase product to the purchase price.

Claim 66 (original) The method of Claim 65, wherein the cost of the point of purchase product is added to the purchase price before the cost of all of the plurality of items is totaled.

Claim 67 (original) The method of Claim 65, wherein the device that identifies costs is an optical scanner.

Claim 68 (original) The method of Claim 65, wherein the point of purchase product is dispensed from a device that is integral with the device that identifies costs.

Claims 69-75 (cancelled)

Claim 76 (previously presented) A method for dispensing a point of purchase product comprising the steps of:

providing a purchasable item and a point of purchase product for sale to a retail customer;
storing the point of purchase product at a point of purchase location for the purchasable item;

inputting a customer selection for the point of purchase product to a retail customer terminal proximate the point of purchase location for the purchasable item, the retail customer terminal adapted to process the customer selection for the point of purchase product and a customer selection for the purchasable item;

processing the customer selection for the point of purchase product for electrical communication with a point of purchase dispenser proximate the point of purchase location for the purchasable item; and

dispensing the point of purchase product to the customer from the point of purchase dispenser responsive to the electrical communication and adding a cost of the point of purchase product to a purchasable item cost automatically.

Claims 77-97 (cancelled)

Claim 98 (withdrawn) A method for operating a point of purchase device that is coupled to a device that inputs purchasable items and accumulates a cost for the items comprising:

using the point of purchase device to independently track inventory data for a product dispensed by the point of purchase device; and

communicating the level to a supplier of the product at a location remote from the purchasable item input device.

Claim 99 (withdrawn) The method of Claim 98, wherein inventory data includes data selected from the group consisting of: product flow rate data, inventory level data, flow rate data at a particular time of day, flow rate data at a particular time of year and data concerning a type of customer who purchases the product.

Claim 100 (withdrawn) The method of Claim 98, which includes selecting an advertisement for the product based on the inventory level.

Claim 101 (withdrawn) A method for operating a point of purchase device that is coupled to a device that inputs purchasable items and accumulates a cost for the items comprising:

obtaining a profile for a consumer who has selected an item for purchase; and

providing a prompt to the consumer to purchase a product contained in the point of purchase device, wherein the prompt is based on the user profile.

Claim 102 (previously presented) A method of operating an automated checkout comprising:

allowing a consumer to bring purchasable items to an automated checkout device;

allowing the consumer to scan the purchasable items and accumulate a cost for the scanned items on a display;

allowing the consumer to select, by touching the display, a product from a dispensing device that stores and dispenses product at a location that is in juxtaposition to an area that a consumer occupies as he operates the automated checkout;

automatically dispensing the product from the dispensing device in response to the consumer touching the display; and

automatically including, without the need for a cashier, a cost of the product with the cost for the scanned items on the display in response to the consumer touching the display.

Claim 103 (previously presented) The method of Claim 102, wherein the dispensing device is part of the automated checkout.

Claim 104 (previously presented) The method of Claim 102, including the step of allowing the consumer to pay for the product by credit/debit card.

Claim 105 (previously presented) The method of Claim 102, wherein the dispensing device is integral with the automated checkout.

Claim 106 (previously presented) A method of operating a checkout station comprising:

allowing a consumer to bring purchasable items to a store operator;

allowing the operator to scan the purchasable items and accumulate a cost for the scanned items;

storing a plurality of point of purchase products in a dispenser at the checkout station;

providing a screen that has a dynamic display capable of displaying an advertisement for at least one of the plurality of point of purchase products;

allowing the consumer to purchase the point of purchase product by touching the screen;

dispensing the product from the dispensing device in response to the consumer touching the screen; and

automatically including and adding a cost of the dispensed product to the cost for the scanned items in response to the consumer touching the screen without any other action by the consumer or the operator.

Claim 107 (previously presented) A method of operating a checkout station comprising:

employing an operator to input purchasable items into a device and accumulate a cost for the purchasable items;

prompting a consumer, through the use of a display, to purchase a plurality of different products from a dispensing device;

allowing the consumer to select at least one of the plurality of products by touching a portion of the checkout station;

automatically dispensing the product from the dispensing device upon the consumer's touching of a portion of the checkout station; and

automatically adding, without any action of the operator, a cost of the product to the cost for the purchasable items in response to the consumer touching a portion of the checkout station.

Claim 108 (previously presented) A method for providing a chewing gum product to a consumer at a checkout area comprising:

providing a checkout area that allows a consumer to checkout without the need for a cashier;

providing an area for allowing a consumer to bring items the consumer wants to purchase;

accumulating a cost associated with the items the consumer wants to purchase;

storing a chewing gum product at the point of purchase in a dispenser;

prompting the consumer that the chewing gum product is available at the point of purchase;

dispensing the chewing gum product to the consumer at the point of purchase in response to the consumer touching a screen; and

automatically, without the need for a cashier, adding a cost associated with chewing gum purchased to the cost associated with the items in response to the consumer touching the screen.

Claim 109 (previously presented) A method for providing different products including confectionary products at a point of purchase comprising:

stocking a plurality of different confectionary products at the point of purchase;

automatically prompting, through the use of a dynamic display, the consumer that the confectionary products are available at the point of purchase;

allowing the consumer to select, through the use of the dynamic display, at least one confectionary product to purchase;

automatically dispensing the at least one the confectionary product to the consumer at the point of purchase in response to the consumer touching the dynamic display; and

automatically adding to the cost of the product to the cost of any other items that are being purchased in response to the consumer touching the dynamic display.

Claim 110 (previously presented) A method for providing confectionary and non-consumable products at the same location comprising:

stocking confectionary and non-consumable products in a single device;

allowing a consumer to purchase a confectionary product from the single device without the need for a cashier;

allowing the consumer to purchase a non-consumable product from the single device without the need for a cashier;

dispensing the confectionary and non-consumable product to the consumer at the same location;

totaling the cost for the confectionary and non-consumable product; and

allowing the consumer to pay for the confectionary and non-consumable product without the need for money.

Claim 111 (previously presented) A method for purchasing items comprising the steps of:

transporting a plurality of items to a checkout station;

using a means for identifying costs to identify the costs for the items and create a purchase price for the plurality of items;

providing a means for prompting the purchase of point of purchase products;

prompting through the use of the means for prompting the purchase a consumer to purchase at least one of a group of point of purchase products;

allowing the consumer to use the means for prompting the purchase to select one of the group of point of purchase products;

dispensing from a means for dispensing the point of purchase product; and
automatically, without the need for a human operator, adding the cost of the point of purchase product to the purchase price.